



# On Uneven Ground: Miyazawa Kenji and the Making of Place in Modern Japan

*Hoyt Long*

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The history of literary and artistic production in modern Japan has typically centered on the literature and art of Tokyo, yet cultural activity in the country's regional cities and rural towns was no less vibrant. *On Uneven Ground* recovers pieces of this neglected history through the figure of Miyazawa Kenji (1896-1933). While alive, he remained a mostly unknown and unread provincial author whose experiments with narrative fiction, amateur theater, and farmer's art reveal an intense determination to reimagine and remake his native place, in the northeast of Japan, meaningful.

Today, Miyazawa is one of the most recognized figures in Japan's modern literary canon. The story of his radical posthumous rise presents an opportunity to examine the larger history of how writing and other forms of artistic practice have intersected with place-based identity and the uneven geography of cultural production. The first book-length study of Miyazawa in English, *On Uneven Ground* centers on Miyazawa's life and writing to recreate a sense of what it was to write about and remake place from a spatially marginal position in the cultural field.

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